ST. JOHN'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

May 2026

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Our Mission Statement

The Mission of St. John's Catholic Primary School is to grow and learn in the footsteps of Jesus by being: responsible, caring, prayerful, creative, independent, thoughtful, curious and respectful. We live our Mission by:

• Ensuring that our attitudes and values are transmitted through a curriculum that is consistent with the Catholic faith.

• Delivering a curriculum that is relevant, varied, interesting, stimulating, balanced and appropriate.

• Developing policies and schemes of work which recognise that R.E. is an integral part of the curriculum.

• Developing sound teaching and effective classroom management.

• Generating a positive attitude to learning where realistic expectations of pupils and high standards of work are expected.

• Using a variety of teaching approaches that reflect the needs of individual pupils.

• Participating in projects which focus on the needs of others including local and international charities.

• St. John's is a Catholic voluntary aided primary school, established by the Church to serve the parishes of St. John the Baptist, Trowbridge and St. Thomas More, Bradford on Avon

Role	Designated Person	Contact details
Senior attendance Champion	Debbie O'Mahony	Attendance@st-johns-trowbridge.wilts.sch.uk
Contact to report pupil absence	Sarah Moon	Office@st-johns-trowbridge.wilts.sch.uk
Contact for day-to-day attendance queries	Sarah Moon	Office@st-johns-trowbridge.wilts.sch.uk
Contact for detailed support on attendance	Debbie O'Mahony	Attendance@st-johns-trowbridge.wilts.sch.uk
Contacting the local authority	Education Welfare Services	EWS@wiltshire.gov.uk

1. Statement of intent

1.1. Good attendance is essential to improve pupils' chances of achieving their full potential, succeeding at school and improving their life chances. We define regular attendance as being in school on time every day the school is open, and believe that improving attendance is everyone's business. We are committed to:

1.1.1. Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that:

1.1.1.1. The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

1.1.1.1.1. to age, ability and aptitude; and

1.1.1.1.1. to any special educational needs he/she may have;

1.1.1.1.2. either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

1.1.2. Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.

1.1.3. Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.

1.1.4. Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child.

1.1.5. Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the safeguarding and health and safety of our pupils.

1.1.6. Rewarding regular and improving attendance.

2. Definitions

Parent	All natural parents, whether they are married or not. All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person. Those who have day to day responsibility for the child i.e. live with or look after the child.
Absence	Arrival at school after the register has closed. Not attending school for any reason.
Authorised absence	Authorisation is granted for absence at the discretion of the school, in compliance with legislation and guidance. It could be granted for: Sickness.

	Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school hours. Religious or cultural observances. An exceptional family emergency.
Unauthorised absence examples	Parents keep pupils off school unnecessarily or without reason. Truancy. Absences which have never been properly explained. Arrival at school after the register has closed. Absence due to shopping, looking after other pupils or birthdays. Day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed. (These will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances in compliance with legislation and at the discretion of the school) Leaving school with no explanation during the day.
Persistent absenteeism (PA)	Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason, regardless of authorisation.
Severe absenteeism (SA)	Missing 50 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason, regardless of authorisation.
At risk of PA	Pupils whose attendance is dropping or at a level which makes it reasonably likely that they may become PA throughout the academic year.

3. Responsibilities of the Headteacher supported by the senior attendance champion

3.1. Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

3.2. Ensuring there is a pupils missing in education procedure in place and that this is regularly reviewed.

3.3. Monitoring attendance and ensuring high and/or increasing levels of attendance are maintained.

3.4. Having regard to 'keeping pupils safe in education' and 'working together to safeguard pupils', statutory guidance when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils.

3.5. Implementation and management of this policy.

3.6. Reviewing and updating the policy bi-annually to ensure it reflects local school procedures and is in line with our current model policy and national guidance.

3.7. Developing and maintaining a positive, inclusive culture that values cooperative working with parents, values and celebrates good and improving attendance and seeks to remove barriers to school attendance wherever possible.

3.8. Monitoring attendance and action planning to promote and improve attendance and punctuality.

3.9. Keeping parents informed of their child's attendance and any changes to the attendance policy and procedures.

3.10. Ensuring that they keep abreast of changes in legislation and undertake CPD to ensure best practice.

3.11. Tasking a member of senior leadership to be the 'school attendance champion'

4. Responsibilities of staff

4.1. Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too. They are also responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.

4.2. Monitoring attendance and promptly discussing any concerns over attendance with parents and pupils.

4.3. Modelling good attendance behaviour.

4.4. Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.

5. Responsibilities of parents

5.1. Ensuring that their pupils attend and stay at school.

5.2. Ensuring that their pupils arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn.

5.3. Cultivating an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly.

5.4. Ensuring that they are aware of the attendance policy.

5.5. Impressing upon their pupils the need to observe the school's behaviour policy.

5.6. Working in partnership with their pupils's school and relevant partners to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance.

5.7. Notifying the school if their child is absent. This should be done on the first day of absence as early as possible. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed when the child returns to school.

5.8. Avoiding arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours.

5.9. Avoiding booking holidays during term time.

5.10. Contacting the school following procedures detailed below prior to any known, unavoidable term-time absence.

5.11. Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.

5.12. Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.

5.13. Updating the school if their details change.

6. Responsibilities of pupils

6.1. Attending school, on time, prepared and ready to learn every day.

6.2. Following the school's behaviour policy.

7. Absence procedures

7.1. Parents should contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of their child's absence to explain why they were absent.

7.2. A phone call will be made to the parent of any pupil who has not reported their child's absence on the first day they do not attend school. If the school is unable to make contact with the parent/carer, they may contact the pupil's emergency contacts and/or other professionals or contacts of the family who could reasonably be expected to be able to advise of the pupil's whereabouts.

7.3. The staff member will encourage the attendance of any pupil they believe should be able to attend, including those with minor ailments.

7.4. In the case of persistent absence, severe absence, or at risk of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the attendance staff. The school will inform the local authority (LA), on a termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

7.5. The school will offer support to parents and pupils where there is an attendance issue, including engaging support from other appropriate agencies.

7.6. Where parents do not engage in this support and attendance fails to improve, a 'Notice to Improve' may be issued, and where this fails to secure improvement, a penalty notice and /or prosecution may follow. (see section on notice to improve below)

7.7. Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence, or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will contact the Local Authority and follow the 'Child Missing Education' guidance.

7.8. Where the family is believed on the balance of probabilities to have taken an unauthorised term-time holiday, and the parent is unable to supply appropriate evidence to the contrary a local authority penalty notice/fine will be issued in compliance with the 2024 statutory guidance.

7.9. Where there is a significantly high level of illness absence that is not explained by the acknowledged symptoms of a specific medical diagnosis, parents may be requested to provide medical appointment evidence for all illness before further illness authorisation is given (no evidence will result in an unauthorised absence (O code)).

7.10. This will be used to indicate the severity of the absence through illness, encouraging parents that this is unusual and requires appropriate medical scrutiny.

7.11. Where there are concerns that the absence of a child constitutes a risk of harm, safeguarding procedures will be followed as per the Safeguarding Policy.

8. Attendance register

8.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session as a minimum. This register will record whether pupils are present or absent.

8.2. Pupils' legal attendance is defined as attendance or absence at a morning session and attendance or absence at an afternoon session and attendance after registers close will be treated as an absence according to the statutory guidance.

8.3. Lesson attendance marks may be used to identify truancy within the school day

8.4. The school uses the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way.

8.5. Please see Appendix A for further details of registration codes and Appendix B for local arrangements for school registration.

9. Pupils at risk of persistent absenteeism (PA)

9.1. The school will:

9.1.1. Track attendance data in school at least half-termly to target key groups of pupils needing support;

9.1.2. Use a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.

9.1.3. Rigorously, fairly and supportively use agreed escalation procedures, including:

9.1.3.1. Sending letters to parents;

9.1.3.2. Having a regular review;

9.1.3.3. Engaging with LA attendance teams;

9.1.3.4. Using fixed penalty notices, notices to improve and prosecution as appropriate;

9.1.3.5. Holding parental meetings;

9.1.3.6. Hold attendance reviews and panels in line with escalation procedures.

9.1.4. Ensure that pupils who are potentially at greater risk of harm and need a social worker will be supported with pastoral and academic support, alongside action by statutory services in response to any unauthorised absences.

9.1.5. Welcome pupils back following any absence and provide catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.

9.1.6. Meet with pupils and parents to discuss absence, patterns, barriers and problems.

9.1.7. Establish plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.

9.1.8. Lead regular check-ins with pupils to review progress and the impact of support.

9.1.9. Make regular contact with families to discuss progress.

10. Punctuality

10.1. The school will:

10.1.1. Actively encourage high levels of punctuality.

10.1.2. Monitor and follow up on lateness.

10.1.3. Promote school times and the time of registers opening and closing through brochures and the website.

10.1.4. When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session (Code L).

10.1.5. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and a parent provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as an 'authorised absence' for that session using the correct code (eg. M, C, etc.).

10.1.6. When a pupil arrives after the register has closed and the parent fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session (code U).

11. Term time leave of absence

11.1. Our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

11.2. The headteacher will be unable to authorise holidays during term-time.

11.3. The headteacher will only be allowed to grant a leave of absence in highly exceptional circumstances. Applications will be made in advance, and the headteacher will be satisfied by the evidence presented before authorising term-time leave.

11.4. Any requests for leave during term-time will be considered on an individual basis

11.5. Requests for leave will not be granted immediately before and during assessment periods or within the first couple of weeks of term.

11.6. If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to sanctions such as penalty notices and fines.

11.7. See Appendix B for local arrangements for requesting leave of absence.

12. Missing pupils

12.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the headteacher.

12.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

12.2.1. The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Senior Leadership Team immediately.

12.2.2. A staff member will stay with the rest of the class, and all available staff members will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by a member of the senior leadership team.

12.2.3. Staff will then search the area immediately outside the school and take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.

12.2.4. If the pupil has not been found, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.

12.2.5. The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.

12.2.6. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.

12.2.7. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is designated as 'Looked After', or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

12.2.8. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.

12.2.9. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

12.2.10. Parents and other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil is located.

12.2.11. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

12.2.12. Appropriate disciplinary procedures are followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy

13. Appointments

13.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

13.2. Where this is not possible, the school may ask to see some form of evidence, such as an appointment card or hospital letter.

13.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, a parent or named guardian/contact must sign them out at the school office.

13.4. Pupils should attend school before and after the appointment, wherever possible.

14. Part-time timetables

14.1. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education in school. In exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a part-time timetable to meet an individual pupil's physical or mental health needs. DfE guidance is very clear about the reasons why a part-time timetable might and might not be used. We only make use of part-time timetables in exceptional circumstances and in full compliance with the DfE guidance.

14.2. In particular:

14.2.1. Any part-time timetable will be time-limited and will not be treated as a long-term solution.

14.2.2. It will have a target expiry date, after which a full-time return to school will be expected.

14.2.3. Part-time timetables will only be used to support a pupil's physical or mental health needs. They will not be used as a tool for managing behaviour.

14.2.4. Part-time timetables will only be made with parental agreement and in compliance with our Safeguarding Policy.

14.2.5. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C2 or X for non-compulsory school age pupils).

15. Penalty notices

15.1. Our use of penalty notices follows the statutory guidance on the national framework for penalty notices. (Working together to improve school attendance 2024 p.56 onwards)

15.2. Parents whose pupils fail to attend school regularly are committing an offence (Section 444 Education Act 1996). Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends school, an agreed alternative learning provision or engage in agreed home tuition.

15.3. A Fixed Penalty Notice may be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, unauthorised holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school or where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a suspension or permanent exclusion.

15.4. The threshold to consider issuing a penalty notice is 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks (A school week is any week in which there is at least one school session). This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence and does not need to be consecutive. The 10-week period can span different terms or school years.

15.5. In individual cases the school and the local authority may move to issue a penalty notice where the threshold has not been met. This might apply, for example, where several term time leaves of absence (mini-holidays) are taken separated across the year so that they do not meet the threshold or for repeated absence for birthdays or other family events Local authorities may also issue penalty notices related to truancy sweeps.

15.6. In such cases, the school will:

15.6.1. Consider whether support is appropriate for the case.

15.6.2. If support is given and is not working or being engaged with, then a notice to improve may be issued or a penalty notice.

15.6.3. If improvements are not made under notice to improve, then an application for a penalty notice will be issued to the Local Authority. The local Authority may feel that prosecution is more appropriate in certain cases.

15.7. Only two penalty notices can be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within a 3-year rolling period but the second penalty notice will be charged at a higher rate than the first. The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

15.8. A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid within 28 days. Following this, prosecution or other attendance legal interventions may be incurred. There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. Notices may be issued to each parent liable for the offence.

15.9. Any payments are to be paid directly to the local authority and if fines are not paid by the end of 28 days, the local authority may decide to prosecute.

15.10. For full information on penalty notices, please contact the local authority using the contact at the beginning of the policy

16. Notice to improve

16.1. A notice to improve is a final, formal opportunity for a parent to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued in line with processes set out in the local authority's local code of conduct and is led by the local authority.

16.2. It should include:

16.2.1. Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences.

16.2.2. The benefits of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

16.2.3. Details of the support provided so far.

16.2.4. Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with.

16.2.5. A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance improvement is not secured within the improvement period.

16.2.6. A clear timeframe for the improvement period of between 3 and 6 weeks.

16.2.7. Details of what sufficient improvement within that timeframe will look like.

16.2.8. The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

16.3. Where it is clear that improvement is not being made, it may be appropriate to issue a penalty notice before the improvement period has ended.

17. Removal from school roll

17.1. A pupil's name can only be deleted from the admission register for a reason set out in regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Removal for any other reason could constitute off-rolling and cannot be removed retrospectively.

17.2. A return will be made to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register in accordance with regulation 13(4) to (6) except when a pupil's name is deleted at or after the end of the last term of the school year when they are in year 6.

17.3. Compulsory School age: Regulation 9(1)

17.3.1. Ground A - pupil has been registered fully at another school

17.3.2. Ground B - pupil has not continued at the school following the completion of nursery

17.3.3. Ground C - pupil is dual registered and the other school agrees deletion

17.3.4. Ground D - pupil has an attendance order changed to name another school

17.3.5. Ground E - pupil has a school attendance order revoked

17.3.6. Ground F - Parent of pupil has notified school in writing pupil is leaving to be educated otherwise than at a school (e.g. Elective Home Education)

17.3.7. Ground G - pupil no longer normally lives a reasonable distance from the school

17.3.8. Ground H - pupil has not returned following a leave of absence (ten school days)

17.3.9. Ground I - pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days

17.3.10. Ground J - pupil is detained under a sentence of detention (criminal)

17.3.11. Ground K - pupil has died

17.3.12. Ground L - pupil will be over compulsory school age and will not continue to 6th form

17.3.13. Ground O - The pupil has been permanently excluded from school

17.4. Not of compulsory school age: Regulation 9(3)

17.4.1. Ground A - pupil will not attend school again

17.4.2. Ground C - pupil has been continually absent from school for 20 school days

17.4.3. Ground D - pupil has died

17.4.4. Ground E - pupil has been permanently excluded from school

17.5. For fuller description of grounds for deletion from roll see Working together to improve school attendance pages 64-75

18. Appendix A: attendance register codes

18.1. Attendance (present) codes

Code	Name
/	Present am
\	Present pm
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
B	Educated off site
P	Approved, supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit
W	Work experience
L	Late before the registers have closed

18.2. Authorised absence codes

Code	Name
I	Illness (physical and mental health related)
M	Medical appointments (when unable to book them out of school hours)
E	Suspended or Permanently Excluded and no alternative provision made
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave during public examinations agreed in advance
T	Traveller absence for occupational purposes where dual registration is not possible
J1	Attending an interview for employment or admission to another educational institution
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad
C2	Part time timetable agreed absence
C	Other authorised circumstances

18.3. Unauthorised absence codes

Code	Name
G	Unauthorised family holiday
O	Unauthorised other absence
U	Late after the registers have closed
N	Reason for absence not yet established (turns to O code after day 5)

18.4. Not counted in attendance or absence figures

Code	Name
X	Non-compulsory school age not required to attend school
D	Dual Registered at another school and expected to attend the other provision
Q	Unable to attend school because of a lack of access arrangements
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	Unable to attend due to any other unavoidable cause
#	Planned whole school closure
Z	Not on roll

19. Appendix B: school local arrangements

20. Arrangements for taking the registers

20.1. The school opens for pupils at 08.40 and closes at 15.15.

20.2. The registers are taken from 08.45 in the morning.

20.3. In the afternoon, the registers are taken from 13.00.

20.4. Registers close at 09.15 in the morning and 13.30 in the afternoon. Any pupils who arrive after these times will be recorded as 'late after the register is closed', which is an absence mark. Please see the DfE coding in Appendix A.

21. Requesting a leave of absence

21.1. Absences must be limited to cases of real illness, and holidays will not be authorised during school time. However, it is acknowledged that there may be special circumstances where students may be absent from school. In these circumstances:

- A request should be put in writing to the Headteacher, clearly stating the reasons for the proposed absence.
- The circumstances of your request will be considered, and parents will receive a written response.
- Where the decision is taken to refuse permission, the absence will remain unauthorised should parents choose to ignore this.

Absence	Authorised?	Supporting documentation required
Minor ailments (e.g. headache, period pain, stomach ache, fatigue)	No	
Medical issues e.g. doctor, dental, opticians, orthodontist appointments & funerals	Yes	Parents may be asked to bring a medical card / note written by parents prior to or on first day following absence
Birthdays or similar celebrations	No	
Awaiting deliveries or maintenance work at home (e.g. boiler fixed) on behalf of parent	No	
Taking care of younger siblings	No	
Holidays	No	
Other i.e. examinations, participation in extracurricular activities, rehearsal for events relating to schools etc.	At the discretion of the Headteacher	Parents complete a Leave of Absence Request Form and send it to the Headteacher to seek permission. This form can be collected from Reception and needs to be submitted a week in advance.

21.2. For whatever reason, a pupil is absent, it is the expectation and their responsibility to collect and catch up on any work that was missed, via the teacher.

22. Local arrangements for missing pupils

22.1. The member of staff to notify about a missing pupil is Kim O'Rourke (Headteacher), Debbie O'Mahony (DSL, Inclusion Lead) or Nick Gerrish (Deputy Headteacher)

22.2. The length of time required to complete a school search prior to notifying parents is 10 minutes

23. Rewarding good and improving attendance

23.1. The school acknowledges good attendance in a number of ways:

23.1.1. Daily Dojo points for pupil attendance, doubled if pupil attended all week

23.1.2. 'In to Win' randomised draw takes place on Mondays in each class

23.1.3. Weekly 'Shout Outs' for those pupils who have made a special effort to improve or maintain good attendance

23.1.4. Class attendance mascot awarded on Fridays to the class with best weekly attendance

23.1.5. Weekly 100 dojo prize draw - with several pupils selected from all those who have attended every day that week

23.1.6. Termly 'Green Group' prize draw for all pupils with attendance > 97%

23.1.7. Annual 100% and most improved pupils recognised

23.1.8. Random draws

23.2. In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, the school uses a range of positive reinforcement strategies:

23.2.1. Assemblies

23.2.2. Reinforcement through letters home

23.2.3. Special awards

23.2.4. Pupils whose percentage remains above 97% will be eligible for regular rewards.

This policy has been approved and adopted by the Governing Body.

Head teacher: Mrs K O'Rourke

Chair of Governors: Mrs C Doogue

Review cycle:	Annually
Next review due:	April 2027